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WASHINGTON, D. C.

For the *National Era*.
A DECADE OF THE SLAVE POWER.
THE PRESERVATION, PROPAGATION, AND PERPETUATION OF SLAVERY, THE VITAL AND ANIMATING SPIRIT OF THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT?—JOHN QUINTON ADAMS.

No. 3.

With the rapid increase in the number of slaves, there had kept pace, step by step, the development of a wide disparity, in position and in character, between two classes of whites in the Southern States. The comparatively small number who had bounded became a compact and well-organized aristocracy, bandied together by an *esprit de corps*, which gave immense force and directness to their joint action.

Their non-slaveholding neighbors kept on sinking deeper and deeper into the condition of ignorant, spiritless, and dependent serfs. The slaveholders and the property-holders were identical, of course; because, even if a man made his fortune from a small beginning, convenience and ambition would both prompt him to become a slaveholder, as soon as he was able.

Monopolizing the property, the slaveholders, of course, all monopolized the mental culture. They could command book and masters for themselves and their children, which the mass of people around them could not do; and as to any system of universal education, conducted at the public expense, as in the Northern States, that was out of the question, on account of the division of the territory into large plantation estates, even if the class which held the purse-strings had not esteemed it to be their interest to keep their neighbors uninstructed, so as to keep them contented and powerless in their abject position. The poor and ignorant non-slaveholder had his remaining chance of becoming anything better, by means of one more operation of the horrible system. Labor was despised of dignity. Where Slavery exists, work is degradation for the free.

Now and then, naturally peculiarly well constituted might rise from the slough. But, in such a social state, prodigiously-powerful influences were at work to make the mass of non-slaveholders—that is, the great majority of free people—feel as if they were born to be slaves.

The votes of these incompetent and abused men have created and maintained the Oligarchy, which grinds them even more impudently than it insults and oppresses us. Sedulously using the arts which every Oligarchy seems thoroughly versed in, by an instinct of its nature, it accuses and intimidates them, by turns; it buys their good-will by little kindnesses and conciliations; it talks loudly the language of their senseless prejudices; it plays on the pipe of their vulgar passions; with its command over their precarious means of living, it gives them a sharp lesson, if they show signs of contempt. What shall the poor non-slaveholders do, but vote the privileged class into power, just as often as election day comes round? They have no knowledge of public affairs, except what comes to them through the distorting medium of their masters—no general information but to place them in the public? What will they do, but vote the privileged class into power, just as often as election day comes round? They have no knowledge of public affairs, except what comes to them through the distorting medium of their masters—no general information but to place them in the public?

“Oh, sir, you are quite crazy!” said old Mannerstedt, aghast at Mannerstedt’s fervor.

“Do you not see we are in the public street? Wait until you can’t pass by without looking at me; and I hope with all my heart that my readers might expect ‘a revelation’ to their eyes.”

“I am not, and have not,” said the old gentleman, smiling; “but look at your son, and find another, like a sensible man.”

“I certainly will not do the first,” said Mannerstedt, “for my principles forbid it, heavy as the task is, to do any harm to a sensible man.”

“It was decided, to-day by a majority of voters, that the old gentleman, greatly pleased, and so well known, will be able to offer your a decent income.”

Very thankful, and much affected, Mannerstedt pressed his old friend’s hand.

“Oh, sir, how have I loved my mother! how blessed she has been, and how she has been so much to me, and to my heart, and to my soul.”

“I am not, and have not,” said the old man; “but look at your son, and find another, like a sensible man.”

“Good evening, dear uncle!” said Rose, all but weeping with joy, and with a smile that lit up her face.

“Good evening, dear uncle!” said Rose, all but weeping with joy, and with a smile that lit up her face.

“Will you not be the very latest,” replied Mannerstedt, laughing, “but we will all go quickly to bed.”

“That will delight her,” Mannerstedt assured him.

“She is so unimpassioned, true, and good, that she will be a heart, and I will be glad to receive her as a daughter.”

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“Pray do me the honor of a kiss, and then we will go quickly to bed.”

“Do not be too hasty,” said the old gentleman, in a tone of admonition; “you will hardly have time to come and go that—plenty of time in which to kiss me.”

“Oh, sir, that would be the very latest,” replied Mannerstedt, laughing, “but we will all go quickly to bed.”

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